MAYA

WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE

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A DRAMA

BY

WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE

Author of "Dorothy Day" and of other books

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MAYA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Pedro de Sandoval, survivor of a wrecked crew of Spaniards cast ashore on the coast of Yucatan previous to the exploitation of that country, his companions having been previously sacrificed to the gods by the natives, and Sandoval himself held in slavery, from which he escaped.

Ahpula, king of the Maya race, inhabiting Yucatan, with his capital at Mani.

Queen, wife of Ahpula.

Ahkin Mai, high priest, and other sacrificial priests.

Canek, lord of Peten-Itza, inhabiting Tayasol, a city upon an island in a lake in the southern part of Yucatan.

Bacab, a spy of Canek.

Maya, daughter of Ahpula.

Ytzatil, Zayi and other maidens attendant upon Maya.

Ambassador from Ahpula.

Maria, Countess of Millaflores.

Bishop of Mereda.

Priests, monks, Spaniards, natives, etc.

The scene is laid first at Mani; then on the shore of the lake of Peten-Itza; again at Mani; afterwards at Uxmal, the ancient capital of Yucatan at Merida.

Time: Immediately preceding and following the Spanish invasion of Yucatan.

ACT I

SCENE I

The scene discloses one of the senotes, or large caves, in Yucatan, with a pool in the center and an orifice above from which light comes. Palm trees lean over the orifice and vines hang down from it. A chain of vines twisted together reaches the pool. There is a rock on the right of the stage large enough to conceal a man's body and projecting into the pool. Tropical flowers and plants grow around the pool. SANDOVAL *is discovered scantily and meanly clad, with a bow of saplings and a rude arrow. He has just awakened from a long sleep.*

Sandoval.

If but the waking were the dream!
  If but the dream were true!
How softly did the sunlight stream,
  How cool the breezes blew!
Once more around my boyhood's home
Through verdant meadows did I roam,
  And loitered by the brook
That chattering through the valley flowed,
  Then down along the shady road
My truant way I took.

And there the white-walled cottage stood
  Bedecked with rose and vine;
There browsing in the quiet wood
  Contented lowed the kine;

From the far hamlet rang the stroke
Of chapel bell; the laggard smoke
Curled slowly up the sky;
The flock came straggling down the lane,
And from the thicket gushed a strain
Of twittering melody!

What mad desire drove me from such a home?
Ah, what a land is this! No glistening stream,
No lake nor laughing water anywhere
Save in the dark recesses of these rocks.
A low, sad land with stunted hills and trees—
A sun that hurls its rays upon the earth
Till all things hide; or slinks behind gray clouds
As sullen as the land. Hot airs that choke
The breath at noonday, and contagion bear
With chill of night. Thickets with serpents filled
And noisome insects, but no shade nor cheer!
I have outslept the day, outslept the night.
Ah, but how sweet the rest after long toil!
If but a friend I had in these grim wilds!
How green the pool, and fresh and deep! But whence
Flows its clear current? Outlet there is none,
Nor ingress, yet the rocks give forth the stream
And bear it hence away. There is my chain
Of vines. See how it sways in the faint breeze
While the leaves upward curl! I must ascend
And seek my food, for there is none below.

[*Takes a deep draught from the pool, then looks again upon the rope of vines.*

Will the vines bear me? Look! the chain is loosed
By constant swaying and the lowest link
Uncoils. Quick! I must climb it ere it part.

[*Climbs the rope, and just before he reaches the point where the lowest section was fastened to the one above, it parts and he falls back into the cavern. After a pause, rising, he looks at the broken links and then around him, and is gradually overcome by despair.*

Horrible fate! Within this tomb immured
Here must I waste and die! There is no hope,
No food, no succor! Ah, thrice happy they,
My lost companions, slaughtered to the gods
Of this accursed land! The pang was short
And there were friends together when they died.
But the long hunger and the agony
Alone! Alone! See that black vulture swoop
Down through the narrow circle of the sky!
His beak may tear mine eyeballs as I lie
Helpless awaiting death. Is there no hope?
Whence comes the breeze that upward curls the leaves?
See! See! A curving track worn in the stone!
Whither it leads I must discover. Joy!

[SANDOVAL, *following the track, perceives behind a jutting rock, invisible except from a few yards' distance, an exit from the cavern, a low gallery leading into utter darkness.*

Here is deliverance! Unknown the path,
But any fate is better than this tomb!

[*He disappears. After a few moments the low sounds of distant music, weird and plaintive, are heard, gradually becoming more distinct.* SANDOVAL *now returns hastily, goes to the farther end of the cavern and hides behind the rock projecting into the pool. A file of Indian maidens enter, led by* MAYA. *The others bear fruits and flowers, have jars upon their shoulders, and carry lighted fagots, which they set down before the entrance.*

Chorus of Maidens.

Honor to Ixtab,
Keeper of Paradise!
Praise let us offer her,
Fruits let us bear.
Glory to Ixchel,
Goddess of healing,
Flowers let us bring to her
Fragrant and fair!

[*They bring their jars to the pool, they splash their feet in the clear water, they fill the vessels and set them down by the margin. Then they sit down themselves, and, dividing some fruit and cakes of maize which they have brought with them, they begin to talk.*

Zayi. A golden anklet for the coming feast
My brother promised me if I would make

For him a robe broidered in feather work,
With yellow sun and serpent Kukulcan
Bedecked with feathers worshiping. The robe
Is ready. To thy wedding will I go,
With anklet shining bright as thine, sweet queen.

Ytzatil. Come let us sing our bride song for the feast.

Chorus. Proud Peten-Itza,
Warrior Canek,
Prudent and crafty,
Comes for his bride,—
Maya, the fairest
Daughter of Mani,
Heir of the kingdom,
Sits at his side.

Maya. Maidens, cease your song.
The suit of Peten-Itza brings no joy.
Small hope of golden days with that grim lord
In his far island city. If you deem
My lot so happy, which of you will ask
To follow me?

Zayi. I will go with thee.

Another. I.

Another. And I.

Others. And I.

Maya. What! All? You little know
The fate you seek.

Ytzatil. Yet no fate can be hard,
O morning sunbeam, that we share with thee,
Whom all things love, even the very birds
That hover with caresses round thy hand.

Maya. But with me, children, you may not abide

If suitors come to claim you. Know you then
What manner of men are Peten-Itza's lords?

Ytzatil [*laughing*]. To me it matters not. A charm have I
To bring me one brave, tall and strong and fair.

[*Produces a trinket, a grotesque figure in clay, from the folds of her dress and shows it to* MAYA.

Zayi [*laughing*]. Ah, lend it me until *my* lover comes!

[*Tries to seize it.* YTZATIL *flees and Zayi pursues her around the margin of the pool to the place where* SANDOVAL *is concealed. She perceives him.*

Ytzatil. Oh, look! A dreadful god! Come, let us flee!

[*She runs headlong to the entrance of the cavern, seizes a fagot and escapes. The others follow.* MAYA *remains and looks quietly toward the corner where* SANDOVAL *is concealed. He comes from his hiding-place and holds out his hand in supplication.*

Maya [*after a pause*]. Art thou the god of this senote?

Sandoval. Nay.
Only a man, poor, hungry, with no friends.
Oh, pity me! Let me not perish here,
Nor die by sacrifice!

[SANDOVAL *sinks on his knee, plucks a morsel of earth and brings it to his heart in token of submission. A smile of compassion steals over* MAYA'S *countenance.*

Maya. Where is thy home?

Why hast thou come to a strange land where none
Know who thou art? What has befallen thee?
Sandoval. My native land is far across the sea
Close to the sunrise. In a vast canoe
With wings, borne by the winds, we came. A storm
Wrecked the great vessel. In a little boat
For thirteen dreadful days of quenchless thirst
We drifted, and we cast one after one
Our comrades' corpses into the steaming sea.
At last we reached a low flat shore and sank
Upon the sand in utter weariness.
With screams a troop of dark-skinned men sprang forth
From the close thickets. We were bound and held
For sacrifice until one dreadful morn
Our chief and four companions were dragged forth
Up a steep pyramid, their hearts torn out
And thrown into the face of the stern god
That grinned upon the summit. Wild the feast
And drunken rout that followed till our guards
Slept, while we gnawed our bonds and madly fled
Through the grim wilderness. Then seized again
We pined in hopeless slavery. I, who saw
The remnant of our band thus perishing,
Resolved upon a second flight alone,
Content to be the comrade of the deer,
The wildcat and the serpent—better far
Than endless bondage with its stripes and toil!
Here are its marks, scars of the lash unhealed.
Then the pools dried and water failed. No streams
Nor brooks nor fountains! Thirsting unto death
To this deep cavern I descended. There

The broken chain of vines down which I climbed,
Thou knowest the rest. Behold me here, thy slave!
[*He sinks to the ground and kisses the hem of her garment.*

Pity and save!

Maya. [*quietly.*] Come with me, have no fear.
[*Shows him a recess in the rocks covered with vines. She takes the mantle from her shoulders and throws it over him. Then she returns and walks across the senote toward the entrance of the cavern.*

[*Reflecting.*] How could I see those blue eyes turned
On me while on the sacrifical stone he lies?

But how to save him? Here he cannot stay.
My father's men will find him and his fate
Is certain death, for Ahkin Mai fails not
In duty to the gods! Ah, what a doom! [*She shudders.*]
When Peten-Itza comes to claim my hand
I must depart, while this poor wanderer
Remains alone to die! It shall not be!
Did not my maidens take him for a god?
Gods walk the earth. Even great Zamna came
And taught us laws and writing and the ways
Of sun and stars and healing. Kukulcan
Changed into form of man his serpent guise,
And Chilan Balam's books of prophecies
Foretell a god shall come across the sea.
The god is here, so Ytzatil declared.
All will believe. But the real deities!
Will they avenge the guile, or bend their smiles

On me in pity? Let me learn their will.
[*She picks up a handful of maize and holds it forth.*
Zahuy! goddess! Vestal fair!
Will they punish? Will they spare?
What will please the gods in heaven?
Will they send me happy days?
Let me count the grains of maize. [*Counts.*]
Ay, they smile! the tale is even!
Here are the jars. I must recall my maidens.
[*Goes out. Orchestra. Returns, followed by her suite.*

Zayi. Thanks to the Ixchel, thou art safe and well!

Ytzatil. Did he not harm thee? Whither has he gone?

Maya. Fairest of gods he was, and harmed me not.
When flowers for sacrifice I vowed, he smiled
And glided o'er the water to my side,
Then rose from the deep pool in the thin air
Through the cave's mouth and floated up to heaven.

Zayi. But whence came this fair god? Where is his home?

Maya. Close to the sunrise, far across the sea.
There did he build great palaces of clouds
And lay when weary in their shining halls.
Then scattering them at will, he leaped to earth
And walked among his people, sent them rain
Or sun as they might need, and learned their ways.
The wicked he destroyed; the just he crowned
With blessings. When the land with plenty smiled,
He thought of other climes where cruel strife

And drought and famine laid their heavy hands
Upon the suffering earth. These lands to seek
A great canoe he fashioned with white wings
And guided it along the ocean stream.

And often to the skies
On the seagull's wings he'd rise
To gaze afar if land he might discover.
But shoreless was the deep
Though the clouds in masses steep
Did as mountains on the gray horizon hover.

Anon he changed his form,
And plunging through the storm
With serpents and sea monsters did he rollick;
Dive and swim and sport and blow,
Through the swelling billows go
With the flying-fish and dolphins in their frolic.

Again within his boat
Would he sit and calmly float,
The laughing ripples round his pathway shining;
Till the swelling sails he spread
And along the waters sped
To the golden sunset and the day's declining.

Thus many moons he fared,
And storm and sunshine shared,
Until upon the Maya shores he landed.
Now would he seek the king
And aid and counsel bring,
To win the tribes that in revolt are banded.

And soon shall come the day
When Ahpula shall bear sway
O'er all our warring factions reunited;
And Uxmal, as of yore,
To its ancient state restore,
And justice speak, till every wrong be righted.

That the glory of our race
May shine in every place
As sovereign lord must he appear before you.
Then array him like a king
When the stranger god you bring
To share Ahpula's wide dominion o'er you.

And thus in pomp arrayed, the stranger god
Shall we lead forth to Mani, like a king.
But until all is ready tell to none
What you have seen, nor stir my father's wrath
Against you that you left me here alone
When the god first you saw.

Zayi. We will obey.

Ikal. We love thee

Ytzatil. And we fear thy punishment!

Maya.

Bear you the water jars without the cave.
Await me in the gardens of the king.

[*The maidens withdraw.* MAYA *goes to the recess where* SANDOVAL *is concealed and draws aside the vines that hang in front of it.* SANDOVAL *comes forth.*

Didst hear my tale? No? Then I must tell thee all.
My maidens took thee for a stranger god.
And one with fair locks and blue eyes like thine
Our books of prophecy have long foretold.
Therefore we will array thee like a god,
And when the robes are ready we will come
And lead thee to the palace of the king,
My father, at whose side thou shalt abide.

Sandoval. Thy father, king of Mani! What am I?
[*He kneels and kisses the hem of her robe.*
That thou shouldn't pity me? [*She raises him.*
Nay, gracious queen!

Maya. Ahpula is the king of all the tribes
That bear the Maya name, a name he gave
His daughter when her infant brother died,
For in her was the hope of all her race.
Here do we dwell to-day, but far away,
Where the low hills slope southward, is a burg
Fairest of all, builded in ancient days—
Great Uxmal. There our royal fathers reigned
Till war between the tribes destruction wrought
To the proud race. Then those who still were true
Followed the king in exile, built a town
Called "Mani"—"It is past"—for the great days
Were gone, and here in echoes faint we reign
Of the proud worship and imperial pomp
Of mighty Uxmal. Me, last of the line,
Chief of the sacred sisterhood, they made,—
Those daughters of the Sun who keep alive
The fire within his shrine, and fruits and flowers
Bear to the goddesses. Thus have I learned

The lore of priests and gods.
Sandoval. What must I do
When to the king I come?
Maya. Stand thou erect.
And bid *him* kneel, for thus do kings to gods.
Speak in thy native tongue, and what he asks
Answer in that alone.
Sandoval. How shall he learn
What I have spoken?
Maya. Though I know it not,
I will maintain it is the speech of gods
Which thou hast taught me. I will be thy voice
And make reply that all shall be content.
But thou must ever do what I declare,
And ever at my side must thou abide,
Lest they discover thee.
Sandoval. Whate'er thou bid'st,
That will I do. For am I not thy slave?
Maya. [*Strangely distraught,—after a pause.*] Each day I come again to bear thee food
Till all shall be prepared. Farewell.
Sandoval. Farewell.
[MAYA *retires.*

The dream is idle. Can she look on me,
She, King Ahpula's daughter,
On me, a wretched outcast, by her hand
Raised and redeemed from slaughter?

Can she, a priestess, to the immortal gods
Forever consecrated,
Defile her sacred order, break her vow,
And with a man be mated?

Ah, no! 'Tis pity only moves her heart
My wretched life to save,
And I must live forever at her side
Content to be her slave!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

Scene I. Same.

Sandoval.

Dark as the night were the eyes of the maiden,
  Yet shining within like the stars in the skies,—
With tears of compassionate tenderness laden,
  They gazed on my sorrows and bade me arise.

How thoughtful the brow that was crowned by the tresses
  That fell from her shoulders, black, braided, and long,
While her accents, from lips that were made for caresses,
  Turned speech into music and words into song!

[*Retires into the recess covered with vines.* Maya *enters and pauses at the entrance of the senote.*

Maya. Shining and fair
  Are the robes I bear
To array the new god for the king.
  The mantle is white
  And the sandals bright,
And sparkling the gems of the ring.

  The sword is keen
  And the plumage green,
From the quetzal crown that nods;
  And the necklace bright
  With the opal's light,
They are garments worthy of gods!

The chieftains wait
At the palace gate.
The nobles and priests are there—
Till the stranger I bring
To confront the king
And the will of the gods declare.

But how shall I tell
(He should fancy it well!)
The secret that hides in my breast.
For I must abide
As a wife at his side
To pronounce the god's behest.

Yet never a word
Of love have I heard.
And whenever he kneels at my side,
His bosom will swell
And the hot tears well,
But he asks not to make me his bride.

Is it deep despair,
Is it sorrow and care,
That preys on the wanderer's cheek?
Would he be but my slave

For the life I gave?
Alas! It is I must speak!
[*Approaches the recess where* SANDOVAL *is concealed.*

All is prepared. The garments I have brought.

SANDOVAL *appears.*

Let me array thee, for the king doth wait
With chiefs and priests and a great multitude,
And they will question thee that they may know
Thou art a god indeed; for much amazed
Was King Ahpula when I told the tale
How in the cave we found thee. He had planned
To wed me to a chieftain of the south,—
Canek, the lord of Peten-Itza's isle,
A crafty ruler of a mighty tribe,
And win his aid to crush the rebel hordes
That still hold out against us. But I said
That Peten-Itza's vows were words of guile,
That thou alone couldst save the royal house,
And that to thee his daughter should be given,
And not to Canek. For my lord must know
[*Turning away her face.*
If I may save him I must be his wife.

Sandoval. [*Greatly agitated.*] But stay! Thy vow!
For art thou not the chief
Of the Sun's vestals? How then canst thou wed?

Maya. It is allowed the virgins of the temple.

Sandoval. [*Embracing her, his face transfigured with joy.*]
What! May I dwell forever more beside thee,
Within my arms thy gracious form enfold?
And vow eternal faith whate'er betide thee
And breathe such love as never yet was told?

Oh, queen! the heavens themselves bend down to bless thee,
A brighter glow adorns the morning sky,
The breezes fan their soft wings to caress thee,
All nature sings and smiles when thou art by!

Maya.
O, love, how shamed am I that I did woo thee,
That all unsought my passion I confessed!
That I, a queen, like a poor slave did sue thee
Ere thou didst own the flame that filled thy breast!

CURTAIN.

ACT II

Scene II.

Palace of Ahpula *at Mani. On the right center a terrace surmounted by a broad flight of steps, with the palace on top. On the left is the temple of the Sun, on another terrace, nearly the same height. A procession appears from the right, with the* King *in a litter, and at his side* Sandoval, Ahkin Mai, *priests,* Maya *and her maidens, and a multitude following. The* King, Sandoval, *and* Ahkin Mai, *followed by* Maya, *mount the steps to the platform in the front of the three doors of the palace. The maidens and the multitude remain below.* Sandoval *speaks in his own tongue.* [*Rendered only by the orchestra.*] Maya, *who has followed him, stands by his side and thus interprets.*

Maya.

O King Ahpula, (is his word,)
Hear the pale god's command!
Kneel! Take his blessing! Kiss the sword
He beareth in his hand!

[Ahpula *kneels and kisses the sword which* Sandoval *offers him. The multitude below also kneel.* Sandoval *speaks again in the unknown tongue, and* Maya *thus interprets.*

Maya.

Well hast thou done, O king. Arise!
Hereafter, side by side,
Forever bound by love's strong ties
As bridegroom to his bride,
Shall we together rule the land,
Together guide the state,
And sheltered by a god's strong hand
Thy kingdom shall grow great.

[*The* HIGH PRIEST *now offers flowers brought from within the palace.* SANDOVAL *speaks again, and* MAYA *renders the meaning of his words.*

Though small the need, thy gifts I take—
For how should he lack flowers
Beneath whose breath the blossoms break
In roses on your bowers?
Yet dearer far than aught you give
In nature or in art
I prize your deeds, the lives you live,
The tributes of the heart.

[*Chorus from the multitude below, who prostrate themselves upon the ground, touch their fingers to the earth, and place them upon their hearts in token of worship.*

Chorus.

Thus speak the gods! This is a god indeed,
Dropped from the skies to help us in our need!

Ahkin Mai [*with embarrassment.*] How long, O mighty one, before the feast
To Chaac, the god of cornfields? What the prayers

And solemn rites which we must offer him?

[SANDOVAL *speaks and* MAYA *thus interprets.*

Maya. O Ahkin Mai, why ask what thou dost know?
Not twice eight times the Cross has climbed the skies
Since thou didst mount the temple stairs and there
Didst put the self-same question to the stars—
The immortal stars that never speak in vain—
And they did answer thee. Why ask again?

Ahkin Mai. True, mighty one, the stars can never lie,
Yet old am I, and my poor eyes grow dim.

Sandoval. [*By* MAYA.] But upon every temple in the land
A priest went forth that night and made report.
Each answer was the same. How couldst thou doubt?

[AHKIN MAI, *overwhelmed with confusion, is silent.*

Chorus. Try him no more. Let all in worship kneel!
Doubt not his power lest we his vengeance feel!

[*All kneel.*

Ahpula. To this high festival shall Canek come,
Fierce Peten-Itza's lord. My daughter's hand
He seeks, and I have promised it. His aid
He offers to subdue the rebel tribes.
Dost thou know Canek? Shall I trust his word?

Sandoval. [*By* MAYA.] I know him, for the gods are quick to learn—
And once I visited his island city
And through the streets of Tayasal
In serpent form did glide,
And stole into his council hall
And hid me at his side.

And there I heard the faithless plot
He laid to win thy throne,
I came to warn thee. Trust him not!
But guard thy crown alone!

With many a warrior will he come
In peaceful garb arrayed,
And prone before thee bend his plume
And pledge his proffered aid,

While underneath the girdle hid
Each man will wear a knife,
And at the feast, by Canek bid,
Will draw it forth for strife.

Thee and thy chieftains will they kill,
Thy honored queen enslave,
Thy land with flame and havoc fill
Till Mani yawns—a grave!

It is not meet thy daughter wed
Her father's deadliest foe,—
The aid thou seek'st I grant instead,
Through me thy realm shall grow.

And since gods speak a tongue unknown
To mortals, and will tell
Their high behests to one alone,
And one they cherish well,

Therefore I choose me for my voice
That with me must abide—
And do thou, King, confirm my choice—
Thy daughter as my bride.

Ahpula. [*To the multitude.*]
So let it be. The feast prepare
A god our child has won!
And with her let the bridegroom share
The temple of the Sun.

Chorus.
Come, let us haste, the feast prepare—
A god our queen has won!
And we must deck with garlands rare
The temple of the Sun.

Now happy days and golden hours
Shall bless the Maya land,
While plenteous crops and cooling showers
Are scattered by his hand!

CURTAIN.

ACT II

Scene III. The same.

Midnight. Full moon. Maya *and* Sandoval *on the platform in front of the Temple of the Sun. The escort which has attended them now withdraws. The torches are put out and the banners furled.*

Sandoval. Ah! My own!
Now at last are we alone!
All are gone! The banners furled,
Quenched the torches, stilled the voices,
Hushed the rude carousal's noises,
And we two are all the world!

Maya. Thou art mine!
Ah! how bright thy blue eyes shine!
Be, then, wise and great and brave
Like the god I have declared thee!
Bless the realm I have prepared thee,
And my king and people save!

Blessed fate!
More than royal is my state!
Never lingering behind;
I shall ever keep beside thee,
Share the lot the fates provide thee,
Happiest of womankind!

Long may we thus abide!
Long may the dread
Yuncemil, who cuts short men's days,
Falter and hesitate ere on thy head,
Crowned with these golden locks, he lays
His skeleton hand to tear thee from my side!
But should he come, I too will follow him
And make the dreadful journey to the world
Of spirits. There together shall we walk
Between the crags that hang on either side
The narrow path to crush the fearful hearts
Of the unworthy. Thee they shall not harm,
For I with my great love will shelter thee
Until thou pass. When we together meet
The worm whose huge bulk writhes along the plain,
We shall not fear him, for his sting destroys
None but the craven souls that flee. The "Wind
Of Knives" shall beat in vain the while we cross
The desert's eight and nine great streams that flow
Past islands of the dead—there must I lean
On thy strong arm, for thou dost know the ways
Of the waters, that they overwhelm us not.
And when we reach the gardens of the blest,
Ixtab the goddess will come forth to meet
Ahpula's child, and thee too will she greet
When I shall tell her that thou art my love.
And she will lead us to the Tree of Life,
Yaxche, whose branches wide stretch o'er the flood,
And there the maids of Paradise shall spread
Our tables, bring us food and wine, and I
Shall sing to thee in the cool shade forever.

Thus will it be with us, if thou shalt die;
But if I go before thee, I will ask
Ixtab, the queen, to change me to a bird,
And homeward will I spread my wings and fly
Back to thy home and mine, and thou shalt see me
Flitting among the boughs, and at thy door
I'll flutter and upon thy shoulder light,
And loud and clear I'll sing when thou art glad
And soft and low when thou art filled with grief,—
To bring thee comfort. Thou wilt not forget?
For shouldst thou seek another bride, my voice
Will choke and my wings droop and I will hide
From thee and mourn.

Sandoval. I seek another bride?
Forget thee? If my heart shall ever beat
With any thought untwined with love of thee
May it be still forever!

Maya. [*Releasing him and gazing into his eyes.*] Be then true
Not in this life alone, but through the shades
Of Mitnal. When thou comest after me,
I will be with thee on the dreadful way.
I will caress thy cheek with my soft plumes
And sing a song of triumph in thine ear
'Mid the dark terrors. Ixtab will I call,
To tell her thou art coming, and prepare
Thy home and mine under the Tree of Life,
Where I shall be thy bride again and dwell
With thee forever.

Sandoval. Hereafter let us speak
Of gods and paradise, but for to-night

Think only of our love. There is no heaven
That is not lighted by thy shining eyes, no earth
Unpressed by footfall of thy dainty feet!

Maya. But why, my love, should we put off the time
When we shall know each other utterly?
Nay, tell me now the secrets of thy faith.

Sandoval. Hard is it to relate for one unskilled.
Three-fold our God. The Father of us all,
Who did the world create; next, His dear Son,
Who died upon the Cross to save mankind;
And from these two proceed the Holy Ghost,
The Comforter. To testify of these,—
The Church, the angels, martyrs, and the saints,
All who believe and crown their firm belief
With holy life,—the joys of heaven may share,
And the bright vision of the great white throne.
While those who sin are cast for penance due
Long time in purgatory—or in hell
Endure forever pain and torments dire.

Maya. But when the joys of heaven thou shalt attain
Am I to be thy bride?

Sandoval. [*After a silence.*] That know I not.
So great our happiness we shall not miss
The transient love of earth.

Maya. Didst thou not say
There was no heaven for thee where my eyes
Could never shine? Didst thou not promise me
That thou wouldst ne'er forget? Art thou content
To be my husband for a few brief years?

Thy love is not like mine!

[*Her head falls in grief upon his breast. He stands irresolute, but cannot comfort her. At last, with an overpowering impulse, he passionately presses her to his heart.*

Sandoval. Nay, my beloved,
Ne'er will I leave thee, neither on earth, in heaven,
Nor midst the pains of hell! Where'er thou art
There will I be. Beneath the Tree of Life
Will we together dwell, and all thy gods
And dreams of paradise, they shall be mine!

[*She stands erect in the moonlight and her face is transfigured by her joy. Then they walk hand in hand into the bridal chamber and draw together the heavy curtains that shut out the world.*

ACT II

Scene IV.

Peten-Itza. Shore of a lake. On the right is an island in the distance crowned by the pyramids, the temples, and the low white houses of Tayasal. Canek *and his warriors disembark from their canoes and advance to meet the embassy from* Ahpula, *advancing on the left with* Sandoval *and* Maya *at its head in litters. When they reach the shore they descend from the litters and stand awaiting the old chief. As* Canek *approaches and sees the thick tresses and dark eyes of* Maya *and her unconscious majesty, a great desire possesses him.*

Canek. [*Apart.*] When King Ahpula's daughter I shall wed
This maid shall be my slave, for there is none
Like her upon the earth!
[*Making his obeisance to* Sandoval.
[*Aloud.*] O thou who comest
From the great king, what message dost thou bring?
[Sandoval *speaks to* Maya *apart* (*rendered by the orchestra*), *and she thus interprets.*

Sandoval. [*By* Maya.]
More than Ahpula's messenger am I.
I am the god your prophets have foretold,
And all your inmost thoughts I can descry
And your most secret purposes unfold.
Hither I came your hearts and lives to mould;

But my deep counsels will I never share
Save in the speech of gods! These I withhold
Till she, my priestess, shall the message bear,
And from the god's own tongue their meaning shall declare.

Canek. [*Eyeing him doubtfully.*] What says the king?

[SANDOVAL *speaks, and* MAYA, *flushing with anger, thus interprets.*

Sandoval [*by Maya.*] Rich gifts Ahpula sends and still he seeks
Thy love and friendship, but his daughter's hand
Thou canst not have, for I have wedded her,
And she is here, my priestess and my bride.

Canek. [*Eyeing her gloomily, then, after a pause, to his own followers in uncontrollable rage.*]
Seize the false god! Drag him to Tayasal,
And with him sacrifice his followers all!
Their hearts shall smoke! Their lives he cannot save!
Bind the king's daughter! She shall be my slave!

[*His followers, filled with awe at the commanding presence of the stranger, tremble and no man moves.* CANEK *draws his bow.*

Cowards! What fear ye? Let mine arrow speed,
For man he is, no god. Look! He shall bleed!

[*Discharges his bow.* MAYA *leaps in front of* SANDOVAL *and receives the arrow on her arm. Their followers draw their bows.* CANEK'S *men retreat in dismay, and one of them falls; the others bear him off.*

Chorus. Quick! Let us flee! His life doth bear a charm.
Offend no more a god thou canst not harm.

[CANEK, *left alone, is forced to follow them. They embark in their canoes.* MAYA *falls.*

Maya. No, love, it pains me not.

[*Breaks the shaft and draws it out.*

I am not harmed.

[SANDOVAL *seeks to staunch the blood, tears his mantle and winds the shreds above the wound.*

Maya. [*Softly to* SANDOVAL, *but her words are heard by one of their attendants.*] Wind the shreds lower down. Be not alarmed.

[*She becomes unconscious. They place her in the litter and bear her away.* SANDOVAL *walks by her side.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

Scene I.

Some months have elapsed since the second act. Palace at Mani. Ahpula *and* Maya.

Ahpula. Where is thy lord? His counsel I would seek
On high affairs of state. Three moons ago
Thou know'st a messenger from Canek came
To tell me he repented his rash act
When thee he struck, seeking to slay thy lord;
And the old chief his homage sent, and love.
Bacab, the emissary, was made priest
Of Echuah, but one night he disappeared
And none can tell me whither he has gone.
Now come fresh messengers to say the chief
Draws nigh with weighty matters to deliver.

Maya.

Trust him not! Ahpula! Father!
When his name I hear thee speak.
Keen I feel his stinging arrow,
Shrill I hear his piercing shriek!

Still his leering eyes pursue me!
With me would the monster mate!
Every fiber of my being
Stirs with loathing and with hate!

Ahpula. But when thou knewst thy husband couldst not die,
Why didst thou fling thee in the arrow's path?

Maya. Far more than life I loved him. When I saw
The arm of Canek lifted I thought not
If he were god or man. I only saw
The arrow and my husband!

Ahpula. [*Caressing her.*] Dear my child,
Thou hast the heart of all our royal line!
But put not thus again thy life at stake.
Thou canst not aid thy lord, and must not die,
For in thee is the hope of all thy race.

[SANDOVAL, *who has become the Nacon or general of the king, now descends the steps of the temple on the left. Meanwhile* CANEK, *attended by a cortège, approaches from the right, and* AHPULA'S *five councilors come down the center.* SANDOVAL, *the councilors, and* CANEK, *with three of his followers* [*among them* BACAB, *priest of Echuah*], *now mount the steps of the palace. When they reach the platform at the top,* CANEK *falls to the earth before the king.*

Canek. O king, forgiveness grant for my rash words
And for my rage at thy ambassador.
So greatly did I love thee that my heart
Was filled with passion when I saw the bride
Whom thou hadst promised given to another;
But I will make atonement, for I come,
Thy faithful slave, to show thee thou art wronged

In thine own household and to rescue thee
From shame and ruin. Bacab, stand thou forth!
[*Pointing to* SANDOVAL.
Tell what this false god spoke when thou didst lurk
Within the temple's chamber and didst hear
His converse with his bride.
Bacab. Bright was the moon,
The city was asleep, and I lay hid
Behind the curtain in the temple chamber
Where the king's daughter with her lord abides.
Forth to the terrace they together walked
While I peeped out and saw them, and I heard
His faithless words: "Ah, little have I done
To earn the wealth of love that I have won!"
She answered, "Though thou couldst not heal my wound
When Canek's arrow smote me and I swooned,
I cherish thee the more, for how could I
Be the brief bride of one who could not die
Nor suffer? Nay, thy very need
For thee did plead
More than the strength that all the gods could give.
I saw thee doomed to die,
I loved thee utterly,
I bade thee rise, become a god and live."
Then answered he, "Too much thy words do prove,
For precious as thou art in the king's eye,
And in thy people's love,
Little thy need of me
A wandering outcast; yet I cherish thee
Beyond all price." And she, "I need thee not!
The world would be a desert every hour

Wert thou not at my side." And now their lips
Together came and to the chamber both
Withdrew. Then while they seemed to sleep I rose
From my dark corner and the curtain drew
Softly to steal away. But as I passed
The moon gleamed through the doorway. Then she waked,
Walked to the terrace, watched the gleaming skies
And the white town, and when her husband followed
I heard her say to him, "It must have been
Xibalba, 'he who fades,' for he has passed
Like a soft mist, and the stars shine again."

Canek. He hath confessed that he was not a god
Nor could he heal thy daughter. Let him die!

[SANDOVAL *stands confused and silent.*

Maya. Wilt thou believe the tale of a base spy
Who lurked and vanished like the Evil One?

Ahpula. Why does the god not speak? Could he not heal thee?

Canek. Nay, let us try him. Put his sword aside
And give me thine, and if he shall not fall,
Offer me to the gods in sacrifice!
I cannot harm him if he know not death—
But if he bleed then let his own heart smoke!

Maya. Bitter will be thy punishment, O king,
If churl of thine make trial of a god!

Ahpula. But thou hast spoken of thine own device,
Not at the god's command. Nay, let it be
As Canek says.

[*The councilors take the* NACON'S *sword and the king offers his own to* CANEK.

Maya. [*Interposing.*] Stay! not upon the god,
But against thee will Canek lift thy sword!

[*The* KING *hesitates, but while* MAYA *is still looking at her father* CANEK *draws from his girdle a sharp knife, leaps upon* SANDOVAL *and thrusts the blade into his side.* SANDOVAL *with one blow fells* CANEK *to the ground, but while he still writhes at the* KING'S *feet the old chief cries in triumph,—*

Canek. See! the god bleeds! Now let him heal himself! [SANDOVAL *falls unconscious. Consternation.*

Ahpula. Seize the false god! Bind him for sacrifice!
And for the daughter who has cozened us,
Within the penance chamber let her lie.
Her fate we shall determine.

Canek. O King! grant
That I may take the place of the false god
As Nacon of the king, and lead his troops
Against the rebel tribes. And when they fall
And we return in triumph, let my hand
(Tho' there is little honor in the deed)
Tear out his heart and offer it with prayers
To our offended gods, and at the feast
Do thou bring forth thy daughter and command
She eat the meat of sacrifice. To me,
As thou didst promise, grant her as my wife,
To keep her so that she break faith no more.

Ahpula. Go forth as Nacon of the king. I know
Thy skill and power in battle. The false god
Shall perish by the Nacon's hand indeed;

For this his task, but let not Maya taste
The food of sacrifice, nor will it be
Light task for thee to keep her as thy bride.

[MAYA, *unperceived, has picked up* CANEK'S *knife and hides it.*

Canek. Only into my hands deliver her,
And old although I be, I still shall find
Some gentle way to make her serve her lord!

CURTAIN.

ACT III

Scene II.

The same, after some weeks. Sandoval *is brought forth with other captives, all bound for sacrifice. One is already stretched upon the altar.* Maya, *in festal garments, with sad face, but eyes gleaming with unshaken spirit.* Canek, *his long hair annointed with blood, is acting as chief sacrificial priest. Four other priests hold the arms and feet of the captive on the altar. Other priests behind. The* King, Queen *and court attend.*

Chorus [*of Sacrificial priests.*]
Beat the tunkul, strike the drum!
Kukulcan, to thee we come,
Bless thee that we met the foe,
Smote him sore and laid him low!
Make us triumph once again!
Give us offspring, health, and rain.
See what troop of slaves we bring!
Sacrifice them while we sing!
Human hearts thy maw shall sate—
See them smoke and palpitate!

Canek. Next let us place the pale god on the altar.

Ahpula. [*To* Maya.] Stay, child, thou hast deceived me, and the god
Whom thou didst bring was false. Therefore the chief

To whom I promised thee may claim thy hand.
Canek shall be thy husband.

Maya. Dost thou dream
That for a single hour I would survive
My lord, or fancy I would live the bride

[*Drawing forth the knife wound in the tresses of her hair.*

One moment of his murderer? Nay, come
Not near, or at one blow shall perish
The hope of all thy line! And must I slay
The child whose heart beats under mine? Then last
Of all thy race thou shalt be, for my knife
Shall not be put aside till thou hast freed
My lord and pledged to me thy royal word
He may go forth in peace, and I will follow.

[The QUEEN-MOTHER *plucks* AHPULA'S *robe and supplicates him.*

Queen. Bethink thee, O my lord, we must not lose
Our child. Long years have I watched over her
And loved her, and she ever was the pride
Of thine own heart. Hard, when at thy command,
I spoke not with her nor looked upon her face
During the days of her captivity.
Yet thou didst will it, and I did obey.
But now, sweet lord, we must not see her die!
Pardon her and the stranger whom she loves,
And set them free!

Ahpula. [*Aside.*] Perhaps I love her more
Because she hath defied me. [*Aloud.*] Ahkin Mai,
Pronounce thy judgment. May the twain depart?

Ahkin Mai. [*Aside, with deep feeling.*] Lo! I have
been the teacher of this child,
And love her. [*Aloud.*] Great has been the sacrilege,
But let the deathless gods avenge the deed.
Thy daughter must not die while Mani lacks
An heir. Let them depart.

Ahpula. Canek shall speak.

Canek. If they must go, O king, let Maya swear
That she will send her child when it is weaned
Back to thy court. To Mani will I come
And rear it for my own, and be its sire,
For is not that my right? Was not the maid
First pledged to me? And if the king should die
Ere the babe come to manhood, I shall rule.

Ahpula. [*Making proclamation.*] So shall it be. My
daughter may depart
With the false lord by whom she was beguiled.
But they shall dwell far from the homes of men.
And when their child is weaned, it shall be sent
To Mani, and Canek shall be its sire.
This must my daughter with an oath confirm.

Maya. [*Aside.*] What oath will I not take to save
my lord?
[*Aloud.*] May every god afflict me if I fail!

[SANDOVAL *is released from his bonds.* KING, QUEEN, *and followers depart. The* QUEEN *reluctant, looking often back at her daughter.* MAYA'S *maidens remain.* CANEK *lingers behind, eyeing* MAYA *and* SANDOVAL *keenly.*

Canek. [*Aside.*] It is but for a time! For when the child
Is born, the king shall die and none will know
Why he hath sickened. And when Canek reigns
[*Pointing to* MAYA *and* SANDOVAL.
Their hearts shall smoke in bloody sacrifice! [*Exit.*

Sandoval. But whither lies our path?

Maya. To great Uxmal,
The long forsaken city of my sires,
Where there are stately dwellings in whose halls
The last of Uxmal's line may find a home.
Our love will greater grow in solitude,
Till in some happier hour we shall return.
What says my lord?

Sandoval. In forest or in court
If thou art there it will be paradise!

CURTAIN.

ACT III

Scene III.

Court in front of the House of the Nuns at Uxmal. Small bushes are growing in the foreground and on the roof. The House of the Diviner rises behind it. Orioles are singing in the thickets. Sandoval *and* Maya *enter from the right,* Maya *bearing her child.*

Maya.

Hark! how clear that warbler sings,
Full and high in gladsome measures
While with joy and pride he brings
To the mother bird his treasures!
Hear her answer low and soft
While above her brood she hovers,
To the notes that from aloft
Tell us that the twain are lovers!
Ah, dear my lord, e'en thou would'st strive in vain
To sing for me so passionate a strain!

Sandoval.

But well I know no bird in any tree
Has ever loved its mate as I love thee!

Maya.

When me, a tender babe a s'nnight old,
My father to the temple chamber brought;
He laid me on a bed of ashes cold
That out of fragrant leaves the priests had wrought.

And when my tiny form the ashes pressed
That smooth and white upon the altar lay,
The priests with solemn chant the chamber blessed,
And then with reverent footsteps went their way.

What next upon the ashes they might find,
What mark of bird or beast or creeping thing,
With mine that creature's fate should be entwined,
Whether to run or crawl or spread the wing.

And when the priests returned to learn my doom
They found the footprints of an oriole!
Somewhere that bird, with black and yellow plume
Pours forth in song the echoes of my soul!

In all its joys and raptures I shall share,
Its strains of gladness piercing the bright sky,
Its load of grief and sorrow I must bear,
And if it perish, in that hour I die.

When to the land of shadows I shall come
Into a bird shall Ixtab change my soul,
And in the trees that overhang my tomb
Thou'lt hear the carol of the oriole.
[*Pointing to the façade of the Nun's House.*
How fair this temple, radiant as a star!
Had Canek not betrayed us, here thy throne
Had been established.
Sandoval. Yet more precious far
Will be these quiet days with thee alone!
The mother singing to her child, the wife—
Such kingdom is a fairer destiny!

Maya.
Alas! that word! The child! How like a knife
It pierces me! With his first baby cry
And pressure of his tiny fingers, came
The dreadful thought that he was only ours
For his brief nursing time. His tender frame
We well may cherish and may gather flowers
To twine around him, yet when first his heart
Awakens and the childish prattle flows
From his soft ruddy lips, then must we part
And all the petals fall from our sweet rose!
He will be more than lost—our radiant child!
His mother's memory will hateful grow!
By Canek's cold and slimy touch defiled,
His charms will wither and his laughter go!

Sandoval. But in the Maya land no child is weaned
Till the third year—there is still breathing time.
Canek is old, and the avenging gods
May drag his soul to Mitnal. Should he die,
Surely thy father will relent and call us
Back to the court at Mani, where the child,
To manhood grown, shall in some happier hour
Reign king, and thou and I abide with him!

Maya.
I cannot part with him! His winsome ways
And trustful smiles twine close about my heart!
He speaks no word, yet well I understand!
If he were grown and uttered thoughts mature
I would not know the meaning half so well!
Yester morn when we together

Sat behind the heavy curtain
In the doorway of our chamber
And a sunbeam through the cranny
Just beside the curtain entered,
He upon my knee was sitting
And he clutched the ray that glittered
With its countless atoms floating
In the pathway of the sunbeam.
Then thy face before the doorway
Came, and when the gleam had vanished,
How his eyes grew big with wonder!
When thy face again withdrawing
Brought the sunbeam, how he grasped it!
Then once more it fled, till seeing
Face and shadow come together,
With cry of baby laughter
Thee he caught and held in triumph!

Sandoval.

That day, too, dost thou remember,
When we brought him to the altar
That was decked with Ixchel's image—
He, his little hands outstretching,
Sought to grasp it, while we held him.
Thrice he struggled, then gave over
His pursuit of things forbidden,
And yet every day thereafter
When he passed the precious image,
Held his hands forth while his fingers
Opening, closing, told us plainer
Far than words his hopeless longing
For the thing he might not touch.

Thus we stretch forth our hands. Is it for fame?
Fame vanishes. Or power? For power is broken.
Or treasures which the moth and rust corrupt?
Or is it love? For pitiless death hides love
Within the tomb. We know not. We are borne
Hither and thither and with outstretched hands
Cry to the winds, and who shall answer us?

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

Scene I.

The same. A year has elapsed. The child has died. Sandoval *enters from the right. After a few moments enter* Ambassador *from* Ahpula, *with royal insignia and train. Salutations.*

Ambassador.

Ahpula's daughter too, I fain would see,
My message is for her as well as thee.

Sandoval.

Within the temple chamber ill she lies
By Canek's arrow struck, and cannot rise.

Ambassador.

Ahpula yearns to look upon her face
And hear her voice, and of his royal grace
Bids you to Mani. Sooner had he sent,
But knew that Canek on revenge was bent.
Yet now in Canek's death that fear is past
And his forgiveness comes to you at last.

Sandoval. [*Aside.*] In other days what joy! To-day what pain!
Is it too late? [*Aloud.*] When she grows strong again
Together back to Mani will we fare,
But now our thanks and homage thou must bear.

Ambassador. The king would hear the tale how Canek died.

Sandoval. To Chatemal we fared with our scant train
To bring our comfort to a dying friend.
Returning, the third night, in a thick grove
We slept, till cries of owls awakened us.
And Maya asked what might such voices mean.
Then a dark figure glided through the gloom.
We stood upon our guard. Soon a hoarse scream
Rent the still air, and then came answering cries
From every bush, while Canek's warriors rushed
To seize and bind us. Backed by the broad trunk
Of a great elm I stood. The moon shone low
Behind and lit the form of every foe,
Till one by one I slew them. Then I saw
Two warriors of Canek's troop steal forth
Behind the princess. Her they dragged away,
I followed. One I slew, the other fled.
And now our men fell on the foe behind
And scattered them. With curses wild, the chief
Essayed to stay their flight and, failing, drew
His bow. Maya he smote. Slight was the wound,
But it heals not! Then he, too, turned and fled!
I pressed him hard till he was brought to bay.
Madly he fought, but soon I laid him dead,
With hate still gleaming from his staring eyes.

Ambassador. As thou hast told it I the tale will tell.
The king awaits your coming. Fare thee well.

[*Exit with train.*

Sandoval.

In all the years since first she was my bride
I never yet returned but she was there
To greet me. Now the curtains open wide,

Yet empty is the doorway! Dumb despair
Clutches my soul! Low through the sultry air
The rooks wheel mournfully. What may befall
Too well I know, though my lips do not dare
Utter the thought that like a somber pall
Stifles my struggling breath in fears prophetical!

Accursed Canek! Slight was Maya's wound,
Yet would not heal. She languished day by day,
And yester night upon her couch she swooned
And knew me not, and in the morning gray
Could not arise; and when I must away,
Faint was her smile, cold was the kiss she gave,
And in her dark eyes sparkled not a ray!
From Canek's poisoned arrow who can save?
What power redeem her life from the expectant grave?

When that grim chief I slew, I still could see
The smile of glittering triumph in his eye,
And as he lay in death he stared on me,
A grisly fiend whose hate could never die.
With his last breath he mocked me, "Live your lie,
False god, with this false priestess!" shrill he cried.
"But now her days are numbered! Death is nigh!
Look! See him! Black Yuncemil at her side,
Clutching in bony arms his new, reluctant bride!"

Enter MAYA *through the central doorway, borne by her maidens on an uncovered litter or cot, on which she lies unconscious, and which they place on the terrace in front of the doorway.* SANDOVAL *mounts the terrace and the*

low sobs of the maidens are heard. As SANDOVAL *reaches the litter and bends over it they withdraw.*

Sandoval.

My queen! my life! O steal not thus away
Without one smile for him who loves thee best!
Look! 'tis thy husband's lips on thine are pressed
As tenderly as on thy wedding day!

Never before thy answering caress
Failed when I called thee. Dear, dost thou not know
'Tis I who hold thee close to shield thee—so,—
And kiss thy brow and stroke each shining tress?

Maya. Ah! Canek! Fiend! Let him not clutch our child!

Sandoval. But Canek is no more. Hush! All is well.

Maya. I saw him leering mid the flames of hell!

Sandoval. Nay, still thy fluttering heart! 'Twas I who smiled! [MAYA *falls back upon the litter unconscious.*

Sandoval. [*Kneeling.*]

O gracious Lord, I will not ask her life,
But for her last low words of love I yearn,
And that her quiet spirit may return
From paths of madness and from dreams of strife.

[*Evening comes on.* MAYA *slowly awakens, looks around distraught, recognizes* SANDOVAL, *and smiles.*

Maya. [*Caressing him.*]
Love, is it thou?
A vision strange I dreamed.
It was the heart of the immortal night,
We stood upon the brow
Of the Diviner's House, and silently
Into the mystery of the solemn sky
Long did we gaze, till bright
The Southern Cross arose, and lo! it seemed
Between its four great stars the while we stood,
A countless multitude
Of lesser lights came forth from out the blue,
And slowly grew
Into a mass of burning, dazzling gold!
Then on the Cross was limned a form and face,
Sad, suffering, fair, its pallid features crowned
With tender grace.
And now from all around
Came starry groups in figures manifold,
Of children with bright wings
That floating by the cross in cherub throngs,
Touched the soft strings
Of tiny instruments, and sang caressing songs,
Till the deep heavens rejoiced at the sweet strain
And the sad face smiled through His tears and pain!

Our child was there,
And held his tiny hands to the pale God
As he had held them once to Ixchel's form.
Then the bright cross dissolved and garments white
Upon the figure fell. Up through the sky

He floated, and the children followed Him.
Now far beneath, the constellations grouped
Themselves again, and in wild flames they leaped
Up to the shining Form, but touched it not.
Amid the fires I saw a hideous face
I knew too well. It bore the cruel lips
And leering eyes of Peten-Itza's lord.
His gaze was fastened on one child alone—
On ours—and the old chief struggled hard
To clutch and drag him down into the flames.
But the Bright Being in the shining robes
Stretched forth His arms. "Nay, he is mine," He cried,
And took the child and held him to His breast
And there the boy lay quietly and slept,
As on his mother's bosom.

With love unspeakable my heart was filled
For the dear God that plucked our boy from harm
And sheltered him in His protecting arm
And my dumb terrors stilled.
Zamna, nor Kukulcan, nor the "Sun's Eye,"
Is such as He.
Let me but keep my garden when I die—
My birds that sing in the immortal tree—
And I will follow thee,
With thee adore that pitying face divine—
Thy God and thy Redeemer shall be mine!

[*She falls into unconsciousness again, then awakens with a start.*

Even now He calls me. See His beckoning hand!
Now must I go to Him!

Sandoval. [*With choking voice.*] Nay, my sweet queen,
With me shalt thou abide. To the king's court
Shall we return and many a golden year
Together dwell.

Maya. Nay, husband mine, not there!
For I must sleep a little with my child.
But fear not, I will come, as I have said,
And flutter round thee as in other days.
We still shall dwell together, not at Mani,
But in the garden by the Tree of Life!

[*Her eyes close in death. The song of an oriole is heard.*

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

Scene I.

Years have passed. The Spaniards have conquered Yucatan and established their capital at Merida, where they are now building their cathedral. The scene shows a grove outside the city. A great ceiba in the background. An altar upon a small eminence. Bishop, priests, and friars. A multitude of Spaniards and, in the outskirts, natives, drawn by curiosity to see the spectacle. A wedding procession enters from the left, led by maids of honor.

Maids.

Man may dream of power and glory,
Woman sighs for love alone.
Man would write his name in story,
Win an empire, fill a throne;

But the maiden's dream is purer,
Valor's homage, poet's lay,
These the jewels that allure her,
And the crown—her wedding day!

Maria, *Countess of Millaflores, follows on her father's arm. The maidens separate into two lines and she walks between them, followed by* Sandoval, *conducting the mother of the countess. Maids sing.*

Maids.

Gracious skies are bending o'er thee,
Happy maiden! Blest thy state,
With such bridegroom to adore thee,
Proud and brave and rich and great!

[SANDOVAL *and* MARIA *stand before the altar, ready to pronounce their vows. The* BISHOP *of Merida delivers to them his exhortation.*

Bishop. The Lord Himself ordained the Sacrament
Wherein ye shall be joined. Joyous the rite,
Yet if defiled by passions obdurate,
The hopes will wither and the joy will fade.
Then purify your souls, invoke the Lord
Whose presence blessed the twain at Cana's feast,
To sanctify your nuptials till they shine,
An emblem of the sacred bond that joins
Christ with his church for all eternity.

[*Silence. The song of an oriole is heard.*

Wilt thou, Pedro, this woman, Mary, take
To be thy wife, according to the rite
Of our most Holy Mother Church of God?

[*A deathly pallor is seen on* SANDOVAL'S *face. He cannot speak. The music of the songs he has sung with* MAYA *is faintly heard from behind the scenes. He seems unconscious of what is around him, but mechanically draws out a wedding-ring. An oriole descends and lights upon the hand that holds it. The music continues. The oriole's song is stifled and the bird*

hides in the folds of his cloak. SANDOVAL *falls. Amazement. In opening his garments to give him air a golden medal is found hanging by a chain from his neck. The* BISHOP *examines it, and finds on it the image of a serpent with feathers. He recoils, flings the medal away, and looks with scorn upon the dead* SANDOVAL. *Lifting his hands the* BISHOP *cries to the multitude.*

Bishop.

The doom of heresy, foul, unconfessed!
The proof was here upon his guilty breast!

[*Confusion. The bride is borne away. The* MONKS *gather around the body and chant.*

Monks.

It is the wrath of God! "I will repay,"
The Lord hath said. Let them who disobey
And wander in the wilderness astray,
Fear Him who drags into the light of day
Their secret sins! He doeth all things well!
Crushing His foes in retribution fell,
Hurling the infidel to flames of hell!
To His avenging power let the loud anthem swell!

[*All retire, leaving the corpse alone. One* MONK, *however, drawn by pity, remains and leans over it.*

Monk.

Poor soul, for whom Christ died, how can they tell
How sore thou wert distressed!
What recollection, torturing as hell,
Thy heavy heart oppressed!

Was it memory of a bygone love
That smote and quenched thy life?
I too have loved! None knows save One above
How bitter was the strife!

Did thy faith falter? So too upon me
Hath doubt's dark shadow pressed;
Yet He forgave! So may He pardon thee
And fold thee to His breast!

[*Kneels, makes the sign of the Cross, kisses* SANDOVAL'S *forehead. The music of the songs which* SANDOVAL *and* MAYA *sang together is heard in the distance, and two orioles from the thickets close at hand take their flight, side by side, to the great ceiba in the background, where they sing loud and clear and then spread their wings and soar together into the blue sky.*

CURTAIN.

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